

Opening Statement of  
The Honorable Pete Olson, Ranking Republican Member  
Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics  
Hearing on *Aviation and Emerging Biofuels*  
March 26, 2009

Madame Chairwoman, thank you for calling this morning's hearing, and my thanks too, to our witnesses for taking time out of their busy schedules to appear before us. I know that you have invested many hours in preparation for today's hearing, and I am grateful for your efforts.

While aviation is a very small contributor of greenhouse gas emissions, the marketplace compels industry to continue to invest in technologies that make the system – and the aircraft that operate within it – more efficient and more environmentally benign, no matter the vast performance improvements that have been achieved over the last couple of decades.

Fuel price spikes that occurred during 2008 were a stark signal that, if we are to retain a robust and affordable aviation system, we must take aggressive steps to develop alternative sources of fuels. World demand for petroleum resources, and production caps imposed by OPEC, are driving fuel prices to ever higher levels, and in so doing, they threaten our economy and our quality of life.

Biofuels present a possible new source of energy that could power our aircraft, and at the same time, greatly diminish the amount of carbon emitted into the atmosphere. I remain optimistic that through cooperative government and industry research and development, the marketplace will be able to develop fuels that will meet these challenges.

I commend the work done at NASA, the FAA, and by private companies, some of whom are represented here today, and am hopeful that the good work being done is both widely communicated and adequately funded.

In my mind, this is the kind of research our federal government should be funding, the kind which has practical use for private industry that will eventually benefit consumers, and in so doing helping to preserve our environment.

I look forward to hearing your testimony and to our discussion, and please do not think that I will be easy on Mr. Shannon just because after only two months as a member of Congress I've already achieved Elite Status on Continental Airlines.

Madame Chairwoman, thank you again.